

## "NO BARRIERS", THE WEEK OF DISABILITY

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# 3 December - The United Nations Day on Disability international attention and the albanian reality

**T**welve years ago, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed the 3<sup>rd</sup> of December as the International Day of People with Disability. This was the finalisation of the early UN initiatives to make the international community aware, to recognise the people with disability and involve them in all aspects of life.

These initiatives included, but were not limited to, the International Year of the People with Disability, the UN Decade on the People with Disability and was finalised with the World Programme for Action for the People with Disability (1992), as well as UN Standard Rules for Equal Opportunities for the People with Disability (1993).

## **Why this day draws international attention?**

This day should engage the world to pay more serious attention to the needs, concerns

and aspirations of over 600 million people with disability worldwide. It also aims at raising

awareness about their problems by focusing on the creation of concrete models, through community, national and international programmes in order to offer a new life style to the people with disability.

Disabled persons suffer the differences of the expulsion and discrimination in the society as well as within their families. They rarely attend schools because parent think that it would be a wasted investment, or even school managers become an obstacle. Disabled



women are discriminated in many aspects. According to UNESCO, only one out of six disabled women has the possibility to attend school, whereas marriage is a taboo.

We should bear in mind that programmers for the people with disability are serious not only in the aspect of human

rights and development, but also in the aspect of peace and international security. From the intellectual, moral and development point of

view, it is wrong to exclude ten per cent of the world population from the involvement in the political, economic and social life. If the society leaves out of the education and employment process children, women and young people with disability, they remain an economic burden.

Let's have a look at the government, NGO's and private businesses offices. Do the programmes on the people with disability work? Are these offices suitable and do they

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offer suitable information? How many people with disability are employed? Are there people with disability involved in the decision making? Are the people with disability visible in their programmes?

Unfortunately, policies are not yet all inclusive, programmes are not complete and services not sufficient.

We should never forget that the lack of hope, discrimination and expulsion as well as extreme poverty, which are typical of situation and life of the most of the people with disability in the developing countries, are elements and strong motives for protests and chaos. Former French President, Mitterrand said: "If we live with the illusion that we can make this world liveable for a minority of people, only, we make it unliveable for all of together".

In this memorial day, all the governments worldwide declare

***"All for Us, with Us" shall be our all inclusive goal toward a society that will throw down the walls of exclusion by offering access to all its members.***

all potential promises and the people with disability listen and think that another year is over and that they will hear the same promises next year. Let us not allow that the speakers forget their promises as soon as they leave the podium.

In Albania, this international day was remembered throughout the month of December: It was preceded by an awareness raising week on the rights of the people with disability in the field of legislation,

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services, education and construction adoption, organised by the Albanian Disability Rights Foundation and was finalised, exactly on the International Day, with a ceremony for the promotion of a simple, but very significant book, funded by USAID Albania, on the living histories and the efforts of the people with disability in their individual daily fight for integration. Other groups on the rights of people with disability were involved – they organised shows and protests. In conclusion, a wonderful marriage ceremony between two young people with disability took place. Representatives of the government also attended these activities, in particular the Prime minister Sali Berisha. The first steps of the new Government's work, the decisions and the continuing challenges in relation to the people with disability problems, are promising and promote cooperation.

Governments should take their responsibilities and We should collaborate, build bridges of understanding if we want sustainable and long term results.

"All for Us, with Us" shall be our all inclusive goal toward a society that will throw down the walls of exclusion by offering access to all its members.

**Bardhylka Kospiri**  
ADRF Advocacy  
Programme Coordinator







## Challenge 20

# "NO BARRIERS", THE WEEK OF DISABILITY

In order to raise awareness among the actors responsible for the respect and protection of the rights of people with disability, of the donors and the community in general in the country, on 21 November 2005 ADRF, supported by the Swedish Helsinki Committee on Human Rights, launched the week of disability "No Barriers".

This event allowed us to point out problems related to disability, also based on the main objectives of the National Strategy on Disability, like: legislation, education, health, social services and adaptability by drawing attention to the promotion of the implementation of policies and

legal framework to respect the rights of the people with disability.

Activities in the course of this week took place in Tirana and other 5 cities: Vlora, Shkoder, Durrës, Elbasan dhe Korce. Each day of the week was dedicated to a special problem related to disability;

### 1. Legislation

"All inclusive and non discriminating legislation also for the people with disability"!

### 2. Adaptability

"Projecting nice premises is a pleasure, projecting accessible premises is dignity"!

### 3. Education

"People with disability attend the same schools as other people"!

## LEGISLATION

"All inclusive and non discriminating legislation also for the people with disability"!

## ADAPTABILITY

"Projecting nice premises is a pleasure, projecting accessible premises is dignity"!

## EDUCATION

"People with disability attend the same schools as other people"!

## HEALTH

"Guaranteed medical services for people with disability"!

## SUPPORT SERVICES

"Additional alternative services for the people with disability"!

## 4. Health

"Guaranteed medical services for people with disability"!

## 5. Support services

"Additional alternative services for the people with disability"!

The statements following each of the above problems convey the message of the event of the numerous documents and publications that were distributed.

Participants of the activities were staff members of the ADRF, volunteer students who are active in such events, and people with disability. The activity of each day took place at the premises of the institution responsible for the implementation of the policies and services, as well as for providing them.

The participants were wearing the symbols of the week and distributed leaflets on the

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implementation of and respect for the rights of the people with disability to the representatives of these institutions, that is to Members of the Parliament, high officials, medical personnel, patients of the University Hospital Centre and their families,

medicine students, professors and students of the Construction Engineering Faculty, high school teachers and students.

The same activities were organised in other 5 cities, at the local institutions responsible for the problems of people with disability. This week was broadly covered by the electronic media and the press, by journalists trained by the ADRF on the problems of the people with disability.

The results of such awareness raising activities show the importance and necessity of providing the right information to the responsible agencies and to the general public in relation to the problems of the people with disability by increasing the interest of the whole society in order to respect the rights of the people with disability.

**Narbis Ballhysa**

*Programme Coordinator*

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***A book with the life stories of the people  
with disabilities and their families***

**Challenge 20**



# "BEYOND DREAMS"

**F**rom 21 November 2005 to 25 November 2005, Albanian Disability Rights Foundation (ADRF), supported by the Swedish Helsinki Committee on Human Rights organised the week of people with disability, titled "no barriers" in Tirana and 5 other cities. The scope of the activity was to raise awareness of the rights of the people with disability among Government agencies responsible for the issues of the disabled, donors and community about the protection, respect and implementation of the rights of the people with disability in

Albania. A series of activities were organised in the course of this week on issues like, education, legislation, health,

social services, and compliance by informing the responsible actors and the public opinion through numerous publications and material.

This week culminated on 1 December with the promotion of a new book "Belong dream", a book with the life stories of the people with disability and their families. The book was funded by the USAID project "Support services for the disabled persons in need of wheel chairs".

The book includes life stories of the people with disabilities, as told by themselves, their parents, other family members, or friends. The book brings a novelty to the Albanian readers, as it sensitizes the public opinion on the problems of the people with disability from a different perspective, also artistic. The people with disability, through their own stories, inform the Albanian public on the difficulties they encounter by facing objective and subjective factors in the Albanian society. In the same time they appeal for the





necessity and their need to be involved in the society.

The ceremony was attended by high officials of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, donors, partners and collaborators of the ADRF.

The presence of Mr. Steve Zate, deputy US Ambassador to Albania, the representatives of the USAID in Albania, showed the support of the US government and american people through USAID continuously offer to the people with disability in Albania.

Once again in this ceremony, the Minister of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, Mr. Kosta Barka, highlighted the commitment of the Albanian Government to support the rights of the disabled persons through the implementation of



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social policies and legislation.

This event also served to point out the fact that many state and private Albanian agencies as well as foreign donors have joined us and contribute for the improvement of the quality of the integrating conditions for the people with disability.

At the end of the ceremony, the participants were invited to purchase the book in order to contribute in raising a fund which became a Christmas present for the Albanian association of the children with mental disability.



# Law "On social services and assistance", no. 9355 dated 10.03.2005 developments and concerns from the legal viewpoint

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**T**he Parliament of Albania passed the law no.9355 "On Social Services and Assistance" on 10.03.2005. This law defines the social services and assistance for individuals and groups in need, who can not meet their basic needs, due to the disability or limited economic, physical, physiological or social capacities.

This law abrogates the law no.7710, dated 18.05.1993 "On Social Welfare and Assistance" (amended), and foresees in its provisions new elements to assist people with disability. However, "sort of discrimination" among the categories of people with

disabilities in terms of economic benefits is noted in this law.

The following is a detailed explanation of some of the new elements sanctioned in the law "On Social Services and Assistance", March 2005, as compared to the previous law:

- Law "On Social Services and Assistance", March 2005 (article 4/point 3) has extended the range of the beneficiaries including in the disability related financial assistance scheme not only the people who were disabled at birth or became disabled due to other reasons up to the age of 21 (or up to the age of 24 when they attend

the university)), but also the category of people who become disabled for reasons other than employment/labour. This refers to a huge number of people with disabilities, who are not yet identified, because they could not benefit either from the previous law "On Social Welfare and Assistance" or the social security system. This category includes many individuals who have become disabled due to different reasons such as health, road accidents, accidents at work (who have not paid the contributions to the social security scheme, as they have been doing non-formal work; the national riots in 1997; people emigrating in other countries and who for various reasons have become disabled. A great number of

## "Radio Tirana" Edition



Following the objectives of the Programme "Advocacy and Legal Assistance for People with Disabilities", and in order to be as much helpful as possible to the people with disabilities and their families, since September 2005 Radio Tirana (primary channel) has initiated the broadcasting of the edition "The Law: how much we know it and how much is it implemented" 2 times a week from 11:00 – 12:00. The lawyer of the ADRF Legal Programme, in her interview during this edition, explains the existing laws in the Republic of Albania governing the disability issues, and also offers legal assistance through the direct calls made by individuals from various parts of Albania, including those of the Albanian emigrants in Italy, Greece, France and UK.

people with disabilities have been identified by the ADRF Legal Programme, which offers legal assistance and free-of-charge advocacy to all of them and their families (on disability related issues).

- Beneficiaries of the disability financial assistance, to be treated under this law, comprise the category of people with partial or complete sight disability, at birth or who become such

due to other reasons, para and tetraplegics, classified upon the decision of the KMCAP despite the reason or age and the labour invalids, who benefit invalidity pension and an additional

monthly payment in accordance with the status of the labour invalidity. In this context, the inclusion of the other categories of disability is to be hailed, though it should be pointed out the fact that even this recently approved law discriminates people with mental disabilities as compared to other categories (despite age) in terms of economic aspect, lack of the respective status for this category (benefits provided by various statuses of people with disability) as well as in terms

of the mainstreaming principle.

- According to this Law, all the beneficiaries of the financial assistance, who based on the pertinent medical commissions are determined to be in need of care, also **benefit an additional payment for the carer.** In this way, the then existing restriction, which entitled the benefit of an additional payment for the carer only to those people with disabilities, who were members of the families benefiting economic assistance (who were part of the economic assistance scheme) has been lifted.
- The approval of this law has

disability financial assistance or social services has been rejected with the decision of the local government unit council, **has the right to file a complaint with the court.** Such an entitlement was not foreseen in the previous "On Social Welfare and Assistance" and in many cases the people with disability who claim to benefit the disability financial assistance had to face the legal constraints to protect their own rights.

In conclusion, we would also like to mention another very important element, which is both legal and tangible, i.e the enforcement of this law.

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Law "On social services and assistance" was adopted on 10.03.2005. The article 45 states that this law enters into force 15 days after the publication on the official gazette. It is almost the end

abrogated the article 2 of the law no.8626, dated 22.06.2000 "On the status of the invalid Para and Tetraplegic", which implies that the future bylaws may extend the range of the beneficiaries with the status of the para and tetraplegic invalids. However, the final decisions remain with the respective bylaws.

- For the first time the Law "On Social Services and Assistance", March 2005, in the article 25 states that the right of the applicant, whose request for benefiting the

of the year 2005 and none of the bylaws for the implementation of this law have been approved by the relevant bodies. Due to this, a great number of people with disabilities who expect to benefit from the new law are anxiously awaiting the enforcement of this law. In the meantime, ADRF has received many complaints by the people with disabilities and their family members who are encountering major problems due to the non-enforcement of the law in the due time.

**Entila Zyba**  
Lawyer, Programme  
Coordinator



## VODAFONE in support of the integration of the people with disability in Albania

The VODAFONE Foundation, through VODAFONE Albania, supports throughout year 2005 the Albanian Disability Rights Foundation in order to allow the continuation of the project on the production of wheel chairs for the people with disability in Albania.

In November 2005, ADRF represented by Ms. Blerta Cani and Vodafone-Albania, represented by Mr. Thomas Papaspyrou, signed the contract on the implementation of the project that will provide wheel chairs produced by the workshop "Miresia" to 30 people with

disability. The application of this project is the achievement of the basic objectives for integration of

the people with disability in order to protect and respect their fundamental rights, such as:

1. **The right to employment;** People with disability who work in "Miresia" workshop have produced the wheelchairs. This involvement has directly enabled them to be integrated into life by working and by having a great impact in the improvement of the social and economic conditions for themselves and their families. Funding such projects which





aim at promoting the employment of the disabled persons, is an indicator of the awareness among the donor community to create realistic spaces for their integration by orienting the Albanian society towards a society that does not restrict the respect for human rights.

2. The right to support services; Providing wheel chairs to the people with disability is a precondition for their integration in the society. These means will offer to the disabled persons chances to avoid isolation and become actively involved in the social and culture activities offered by the community where they live.

VODAFONE has offered continuous funding to this project, thereby assisting the sustainability of the real integrating models for the people with disability in Albania.

The implementation of this project will result in the production of 30 wheelchairs for 30 people with disability in the regions of Laç and Lezha. These are people with disability who need wheelchairs and have been

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identified by the local offices for social assistance and services which closely cooperate with ADRF to identify the needs of the

people with disability.

There is an increasing need for wheelchairs as a result of various factors, including illnesses, accidents, lack of identification, etc. According to the official information that ADRF has obtained from the local offices in 6 regions of the country, there are 1 000 people with disability in need of wheel chairs.

The involvement of important companies such as VODAFONE to support this kind of projects offers better living opportunities to the people with disability.



# MEVLUT

## What an effort to go to school

This is the story of Mevlut Noka, a 9-years old boy, who besides the sleeping time in bed, spends all the time sitting on the wheel-chair. There are at least 10 other already identified children in Tirana, but there can be more, who have the same disease and shares the same bad luck. While in Albania there can be more than tens of children like that. Mevlut's story is very sad, but his father and grandparents have decided not to allow that his grey life become completely dark. They strongly hope that their son can at least go to school. This hope is almost fading away for 4 months now, since Mevlut could not go to school to attend the third grade. The family cannot afford the monthly payment of 2000 ALL to enroll him in a private school.

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When he was born 9 years ago in Kukes, Noka couple could

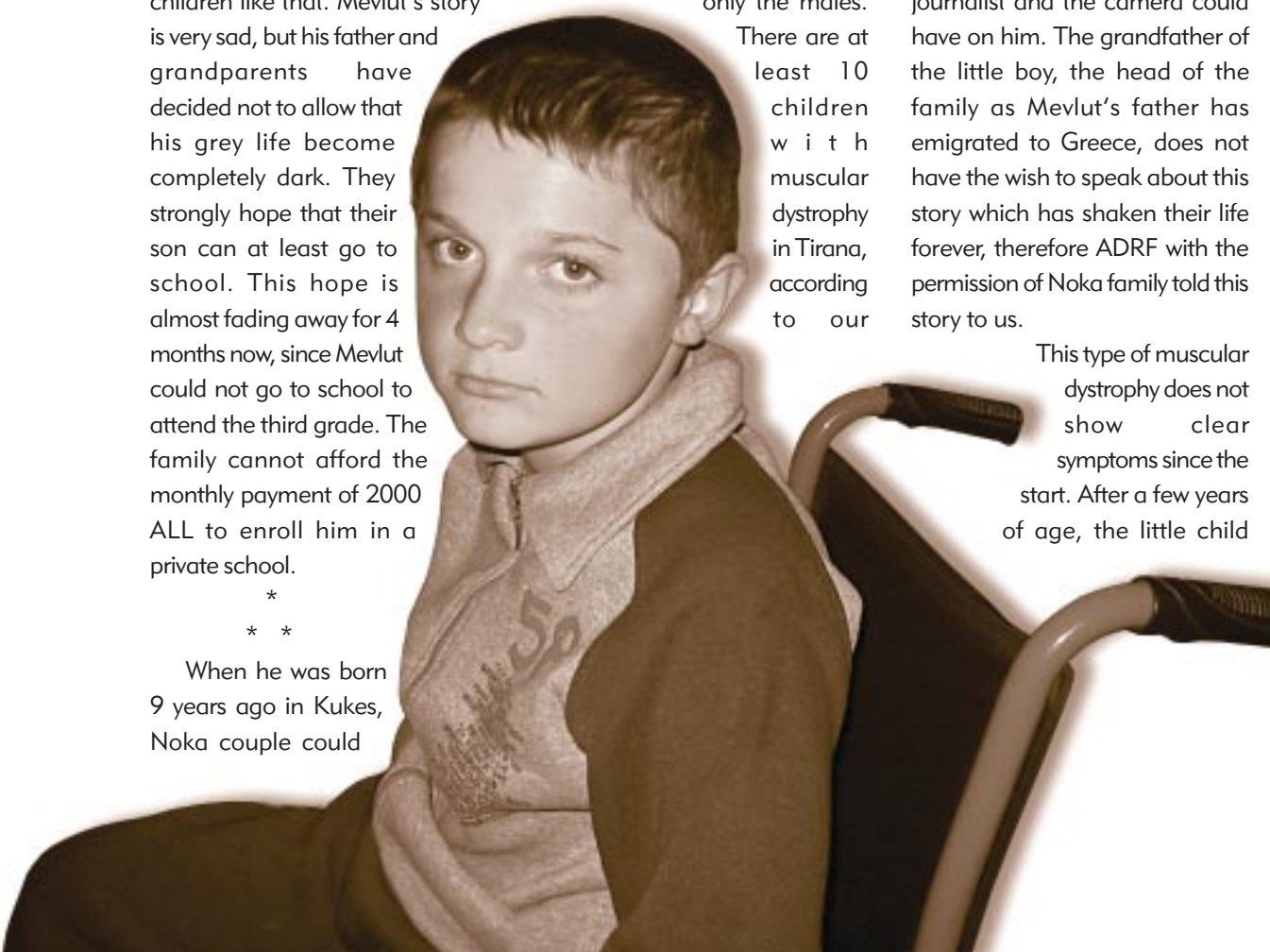
not imagine that their first child would become a wheel-chair user some years later. It did not take long for the parents to understand that Mevlut suffered from a very special muscular dystrophy, an inherited disease affecting only the male descendents. If Mevlut was born a girl ... now the child would have been able to walk. "It is a strange disease, which affects only the males.

There are at least 10 children with muscular dystrophy in Tirana, according to our

records. We think there are more, because people do not like to make public the problems of their children," – says Enita Zybo, the lawyer at the Albanian Disability Rights Foundation (ADRF), the Foundation which is advocating Mevlut's right to attend the school.

We could not meet the child, as the parents are afraid of the effect that the discussion with the journalist and the camera could have on him. The grandfather of the little boy, the head of the family as Mevlut's father has emigrated to Greece, does not have the wish to speak about this story which has shaken their life forever, therefore ADRF with the permission of Noka family told this story to us.

This type of muscular dystrophy does not show clear symptoms since the start. After a few years of age, the little child



started getting exhausted while walking. The child just collapsed on the floor, as he could not stand on his/her feet. They are very weak.

As if Mevlut's disease was not enough, Noka couple gave birth to another male child, with the same inherited ominous gen. Mevlut's brother is now 6 years old and he is showing the same symptoms. He just falls down while walking having not enough energy to walk further. This is not all. Another misfortune of another type happened to them. The mother of the little children abandons her sons and her husband refusing to take care of them. Since that day the father and the grandparents have taken care of the little children. One day Mevlut's father decided to move from Kukes to the capital of Tirana hoping to offer better opportunities to his sons. Some 4-5 years ago, Mevlut's father built a two storied house in the suburbs of Tirana close to Students' City and also got married for the second time. He has a daughter from the second marriage and luckily she does not risk to inherit the muscular dystrophy disease, which affects only males.

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\* \*

Having to take care of his whole family i.e. his parents, his three children, two of whom are sick, and his unemployed wife, Mevlut's father had to leave Albania. Having no fixed-term job in Tirana, he was not able to provide the basics for himself and his family i.e. six more people but

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himself. Now he works in Greece. For the moment, the family lives with the 10000 ALL disability related financial assistance provided to the little boys and the money that the emigrant father sends to them.

Mevlut's story might never come out, if he did not enrol to participate in the children with disability camp, organised by ADRF in September. "We were talking with the children, when Mevlut told us that he cannot go to school this year," – Zybo said adding that after this conversation she paid a visit at his house to learn more about the case. "Mevlut's family lives in very difficult conditions in the second floor of an unfinished house at the suburbs of Tirana. Two years and a half ago, his grandfather had made an agreement with the schoolmaster of a private school, who had agreed to enrol Mevlut against a monthly payment of 2000 ALL, instead of 1000 ALL required from the other children. Mevlut finished the first and the second grades of study at this school. The school-van used to pick him from home to school and vice versa. But this year the economic situation of this family has worsen and they cannot afford the monthly payment of 2000 ALL to the private school," Zybo says.

Moved from a remote part of Albania to the capital and with an emigrant father being away not able to take care of his sons, Noka family was not aware of the existing legislation on education. They did not know that the state is obliged to provide education to

## WHAT DOES THE LAW STATE

### Normative provisions on the pre-university education

#### Article 57

School dropout

#### Article 15

Children with disabilities, based on a written request of the parents and following consultations with the school personnel, can leave the school at any time, when it is concluded that they can not benefit from these institutions or when there exist other more efficient possibilities or ways.

#### Article 16

School personnel make efforts that children with disabilities do not leave the school. In case they drop the school, as foreseen in the article 15, their education can continue at home, if the parents wish so.

Education at home is also possible for those children who are absent at school for a long time.

Teachers who will offer consultations (classes) at home, according to the special school capacity, are relieved from some other duties/tasks, or other teachers who do not have the normal weekly workload are appointed.



children who cannot go to school. They became aware only when ADRF explained to them that this Mevlut's right and nobody can rule it out. To this end, efforts to find a solution in cooperation with the Regional Education Department in Tirana have been made.

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"First of all, I would like to clarify an issue. It is not only the duty of the parents to enrol children at school. According to the law, Education Departments collect information about the children at the social assistance offices at the municipalities and communes. Their list is provided to schoolmasters," – said Zybo, who insisted that Mevlut should have been enrolled at school by the Education Department, though the family did not register him. The lawyer also cited other points of article 57 of the Normative Provisions for the Pre-university Education, which supports Mevlut's right to education, despite his physical conditions.

"In November we made the presentation of the case and requested the Regional Education Department of Tirana to enable his education. This Department proposed that he attends "Osman Myderizi" school, which is the closest school to his residence". However, his house is still quite far. Mevlut has to use his wheelchair and the road condition is very bad. His grandfather, the only man at home for the moment, is not strong enough to carry the child to the school. The Department said that Mevlut's family should take care of the transportation issue on its own. As a matter of fact they have no possibilities," - Zybo said.

According to her, there is another legal provision, which guarantees the compulsory education for Mevlut. "According

to the law, the state can provide a teacher to give classes to the children with disability at home. In this case it would be even better, because this teacher could also start teaching Mevlut's brother, 6-years old, who is showing symptoms of paralysis and who is almost at the right age of attending first school grade. However, if the state provides transportation to the school, this would also be good, so that Mevlut could stay with other children as well and not remain at home only with his brother and sister."

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On 21 December 2005, the Head of the Training Section at the Regional Education Department in Tirana, Zamira Gjini said that she had studied Mevlut's case and all the possibilities for his education. "His story touched me," – she added. Having failed to send Mevlut to "Osman Myderizi" school, Gjini discussed with the schoolmaster about the possibility of sending a teacher to him and give classes at home. "The schoolmaster had a meeting with the teachers, but it was not possible for any of them to undertake the responsibility of giving classes to Mevlut. Their

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classes comprise 40 pupils and their workload is full." When the final respond from "Osman Myderizi" school was that they did not have the possibility to help Mevlut, 9 years old, then Gjini approached the schoolmaster of "Luigj Gurakuqi", the special school for people with disability in Tirana. "It was not possible for the teachers of this school to give classes to Mevlut either, as their workload was also full. On the other hand this school is specialized for children with mental disabilities, while Mevlut Noka has only physical problems. Therefore, I think that the best thing is, that he is covered by "The second chance" project. One of the 6 teachers for this project will be able to go to his hometown twice a week. I am more than 90% sure about that. The name of the teacher is the only thing that remained to be decided," – promised Zamira Gjini.

**Elda Blea (Spaho)**  
Journalist, "Shekulli"  
Newspaper



One of the top priorities for children with special needs is their rehabilitation and integration in life. The work carried out in special schools, common public schools or various rehabilitation centers would not be sufficient, if it is considered as isolated from the preparation of these children and young people to cope with every day life issues, the development of relations with the others, being independent as well as productive.

Parents often think that if these children are able to learn to read and write, then they will be "recovered" and be the same with the others. This is wrong, because there are many other more important things in life to ensure their rehabilitation and integration in every day life. The value and the necessity of preparing people with disability in a practical manner has increasingly been identified during the work for their rehabilitation. This means that every effort made should be seen in the view of the values that the knowledge and skills, we teach them, have for the life and how much functional they will be for them in order to make a decent life.

Usually parents do ask their young children: "What would you like to be when you grow up?". While parents of children with special needs do not even dare to make such a question. But this attitude is wrong. It is a necessity and a must to very frequently make this question and constantly work on this respect to encourage them to find a decent position in life.

Their parents and carers should constantly pose this question to themselves: "What should we do



## The family, children with special needs and their rehabilitation and integration in life

*so that our daughter or son can independently live, play, work, entertain or learn as much as possible in life?*". The time they spend in various schools or centers should also be seen in terms of the values it gives to these children, so that after this they would be able to live like everybody else, to work according to their capacities, to relax, to entertain, etc. Usually, the education or school programmes/curriculas for these children focus mainly on the development elements rather than on their preparation for life. It is a necessity to give a greater importance to the later one through designing plans, even special ones.

The international experience and also the Albanian experience provide various examples, which prove that the strong will and the cooperation among parents, children and professionals have made these people break unbelievable records.

Whatever name we put to these plans: "rehabilitation for life", "practical preparation", "a transition period towards independence", etc., they should

start at the most earliest stage possible. **Education and schooling of people with disability should be practical and functional.**

It should be admitted that this cannot be achieved only by the parents or carers. It is necessary that both of them cooperate taking into consideration the specific needs of every child and keeping in mind the reality we want them to be integrated.

The most important skills that these young people should acquire, are:

Ndër shprehitë e rëndësishme që duhet t'u formojmë këtyre të rinjve përmendim:

**a. Most common personal skills in a family environment:** how to take care of themselves, cook, lay the table, use kitchen utensials, clean the house and put things in order, take care of their health, follow the usual daily life routine independently, etc.

**b. Social skills:** how to play and live with the others, respond to a smile with a smile, play, make eye contact, express their needs and feelings, protect their things and play with the others without causing problems, help with the

houseworks, identify and protect themselves from the troublemakers, establish and develop friendships, avoid problematic behaviours (indifferent attitude, putting things in the mouth, outrageous and furious reactions, unacceptable behaviours in the society, isolation from and bothering the others, etc.), show their needs and preferences, entertain themselves in a group and learn through the others' behaviours, respect the others while playing or in other social situations, tolerate constraints and frustrations, tolerate and accept criticism, adapt to the group requirements, establish relations with peers and adults through having a correct posture or voice tone, etc., asking for information or help from adults in a proper way, and many and many other skills.

**c. Integration skills:** it means the development of orientation skills of these young people and familiarization with the most important things in the environment that they live in. In this framework, useful skills to be developed are those, which will make them good citizens and pedestrians: walk in an independent and confident way in public environments, find the right place to cross the street, check and take care of the cars while crossing the street through respecting the traffick lights, behave towards other citizens while moving in the town. They should also acquire skills needed while using the public transport means: follow all the procedures applicable for every citizen, have a decent behaviour

in the bus or whatever public transportation means they are, get off in the proper station/bus stop, etc. Valuable skills are also those related to the use of the services offered by the community (shops, clubs, ambulances, drug stores, etc.).

In the framework of the development of integration skills to these young people, it is also important to teach them to use money, tell the time, use the phone as well as other practical elements of life.

With regard to all mentioned above we should never forget that the best method to teach these young people is **the model that we offer to them.**

In the framework of preparing them for the life, the development of communication skills is of a special importance. To this end, we should develop communication skills such as: speaking, listening, communicating in written way, and why not reading. Someone might say that these are difficult skills to be learned, but life has shown that many elements of reading, writing, speaking and listening can be taught in a practical way. They should be able to tell their name, their date of birth, make sentences, even simple ones, answer the phone, use functional phrases, make simple and clear questions, establish eye contact while speaking to the others, convey a message to the others, listen to what the others say until they finish, accomplish two or more tasks, etc.

The list of skills that they should develop is not limited to what is

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mentioned above. It is characteristic for these children and young people to have difficulties to transfer the skills developed from one environment to another, therefore it is required that they use these skills in different circumstances, and learn to move in different environments which are not meant to be especially for them, and live as much as possible with other children and young people. Very often their incapacity to do something is due to the lack of experience of a real work/job. Therefore, it is necessary that these children and young people get organised and involved in as much practical activities as possible.

Parents in cooperation with teachers and carers should be interested in identifying the perspectives for these children:

- What kind of work/job can my child do in the future?
- How and where will s/he live when I will not be any longer?
- What skills does s/he need?
- How much prepared is s/he for an independent life?
- Who are his friends and who will be his/her future friends?

Referring to all these questions and not limited only to these, parents themselves should find solutions and make choices through meeting together and share their opinions.

A successful mother in one of these meetings noting the fear of the other parents among others said: "Let us not lose time, everything can be achieved, and if you want to do something for your child start now ... so that s/he learns to do everything himself/herself. We, the parents should make a list of questions and

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provide answers to them:

- Who cuts the bread, meat ...for the child?
- Who dresses, washes and cleans him/her?
- Who decides what s/he should wear and where s/he should go?
- Who helps him/her to cross the street?
- How does my child use the money?
- How does s/he shake hands or greets?
- Does s/he know how to cook something s/he needs?
- Does s/he go to the shop?
- Is s/he able to manage a difficult or dangerous situation?
- Can he talk over the phone, convey a message, take an order?
- Does he know how to wash the clothes, or even use the washing machine?
- Can he keep his/her room in order, or ask for help?
- Can s/he choose friend/s or protect himself/herself from dangers?

**Therefore, it is very important to organize practical and realistic activities**

One of the children of the family asked his mother angrily (about his brother with special needs): *"Why do you dress him like that? Or do you want him to like a person with problems."* This shows that **their brothers, the other children of the same age are the best allies of parents and teachers.**

These children and young people should live also outside the family, participate in different entertaining activities, discussions, go to the stadium, cinema, be part of the real life, make friends and

choose friends.

That is why there is the saying: **"School can teach you to read and write, friends make you smart."** Some parents usually think that the child is not able to do things and so the parents do most of them themselves for the him/her, forgetting that they unintentionally are harming their child making him/her dependent on everything.

Another very important element is also their gradual preparation to carry out different tasks. This makes them feel useful and increases their self-confidence. In addition, we should not ignore their gradual preparation in regard to spending leisure time, recognizing good and bad people, or asking for help in different situations. All these help them enjoy a good physical and spiritual life making them part of the integrated normal life.

As a result we might say that **we should have more confidence in these children and young people.** Many parents work well, but some of them are afraid of losing their children. It is normal to be afraid, but **do not allow that your fear become an obstacle for the independence of your child.** The independence will make him/her an adult, if we do not want that s/he remains "a child forever".

Facts show that even people with serious disabilities can have their own life, do simple jobs and have their own families. If these people are constantly encouraged and exercised throughout their lives without showing any prejudice

or negligence at any stage of their life, these people can become independent and be able to carry out duties and develop relations according to their age-group standard i.e. adolescence and adulthood.

An obstacle for parents is the fear of dangers. This fact as well as their opinion that this is not a transitory situation make these parents to overprotect the young people during their adolescence, controlling every single detail of their behaviours. Due to this, these young people unexpectedly have to face very difficult situation such as: exaggerated sexual demonstrations, etc. which do not happen in those families, which have constantly taken care of developing child's or young people's independence. Not giving the possibility to develop his/her independence to that child, parents keep the child artificially at a childhood development stage and when they become aware they realize that the child has moved from childhood to the third age, preventing him/her so from living the adolescence, the most beautiful part of the life.

Of course, pre-fabricated or miracle solutions do not exist. Each family should try to provide a solution, which ensures a balance between the right of a person with disability to develop his/her independence with the possibility to use this independence to the extend that the society requires from its other members too.

**Prof.As.Dr. Virxhil Nano**





# Contemporary forms and methods in the work with new talents

**W**orking with new talents is nice and difficult at the same time. It's nice because we, people who work to discover and work with new talents, follow them step by step. This gives us immense pleasure for having achieved our duty as persons, artists and teachers. Thus, we enable a talented child to convey to people, through his/her art, an additional motive to live for, by filling their spirit with optimism and love for the life.

It's a long way, full of hardships, efforts and sacrifices to reach this and the role of the teacher is of primary importance and is irreplaceable.

His/her success depends on the forms and methodology used in the work. Firstly, I believe that the main thing is that the musical talent of a child is manifested in various forms and ways, depending on his/her type and character peculiarities.

***...the mentality according to which blind people can only become good musicians is wrong and raises big problems. They have the same skills as other people. They have a valuable treasury INTELLIGENCE, therefore our duty is to create the possibility for them to find and show themselves according to their skills rather than posing limitations***

Therefore, the teacher always has to search for new forms and methods to discover and handle new talents at any time.

In this regard, in order to be successful, the teacher should focus not only on the professional aspect, but also on the psychological one, which is as important.

Initially, the child sees the instrument as a toy, and the teacher should be very tactful in making him/her see the first difficulties in front of the instrument as a personal responsibility and the teacher's suggestions as duties like other school assignments. In order to be successful in this first decisive step, which is a guarantee for future success, we should pay attention to:

The child needs to feel comfortable, but on the other side he/she should see the premises as a place for learning rather than for playing. The premises should be friendly, quiet, well-lit, free of distracting objects. The teacher should create an atmosphere where the student finds the inspiration

to work and does not feel tired. Inside the class, the teacher should not assume the role of a strict observer. He/she should communicate quietly, clearly, stay also physically close to the student and allow the latter to express him/herself freely in the class by creating a normal learning session. In addition to talking, the teacher should demonstrate him/herself by playing the instrument in order to convey quietly and simply those emotions that only music sounds express.

In our communication with a student in the class, we should remember the words of the great composer, Robert Schumann who advised: "No child becomes a healthy man with caresses, candies and sweets. The food for the spirit as well as for the body, must be simple and healthy. Great masters have taken great care for such a food. Use it".

The major goal of the teacher should be to make the student aware for what he/she does in every step. The teacher should convince the student that playing music does not mean only learning the musical notes on the score or articulate the fingers. Together with the explanation of the technical elements on how to master an instrument, the teacher should talk about composers, whose works the child is playing, the time when they lived, their composing style, their respective place in the development of the national and international art of music,

etc.

By explaining to the student the importance of learning the basic subjects, such as recognising and reading musical notes, harmony, polyphony, etc., the teacher frees the students from dilettantism and vanity.

The teacher should awake in the child the interest and love for folk music, because this is a great investment for the creation of national individuality among young artists and also affects their artistic maturity. I also believe that a young artist or an experienced one should never miss the occasion of going to a nice opera or concert by well known or young artists. These experiences serve to the artist to become acquainted with novelties in the field of performance and interpretation, as well as to inspire him/her in the future work.

The teacher's objective should be "learning is never-ending..." and this helps students to understand that it is indispensable to know other arts and sciences. Thus, by being always available, it's easier to play music by making endless combinations of only

seven musical notes, by raising the spirit of the listeners and by becoming the main character of the saying: "artists are engineers of the human spirit".

Art is creation, and there are numerous and improving forms and methods for the preparation of young artists.

Without trying to offer recipes, but based on my experience in this field, I would like to add that we, teachers, can make use of all various sources of information in order to enrich and update the traditional forms and methods, adapt them in order to become successful.

Finally, I would like to say that the mentality according to which blind people can only become good musicians is wrong and raises big problems. They have the same skills as other people. Experience can tell.

They have a valuable treasury INTELLIGENCE, therefore our duty is to create the possibility for them to find and show themselves according to their skills rather than posing limitations.

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